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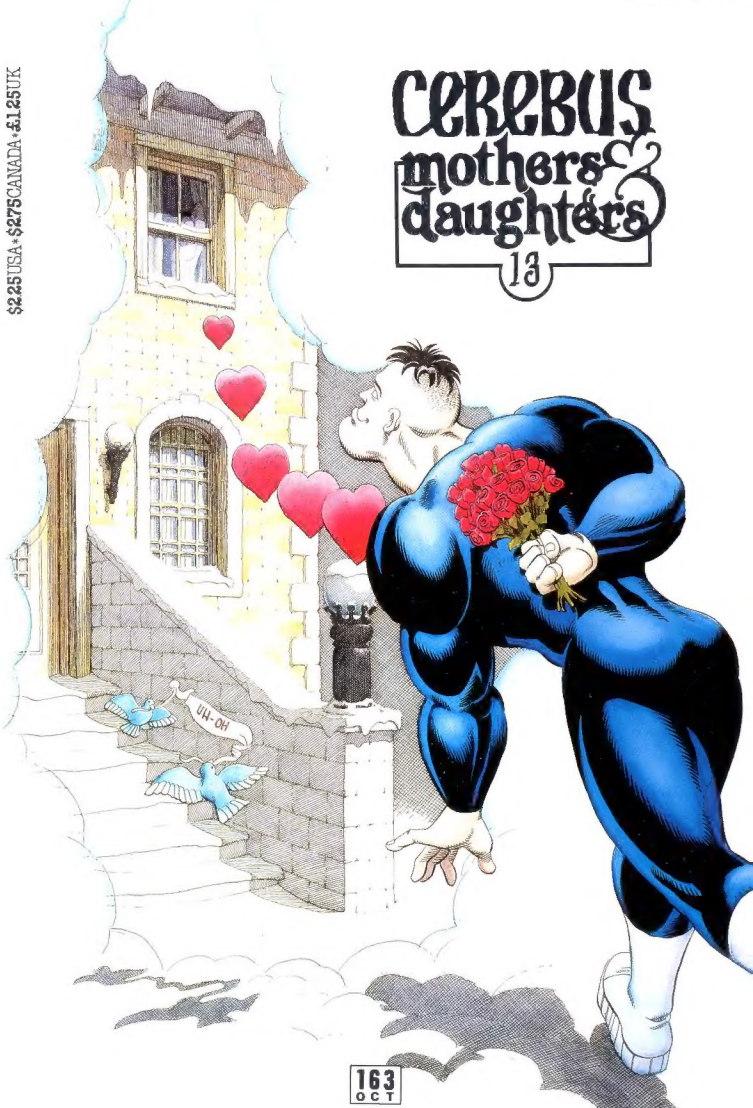
CEREBUS
mothers & daughters
13



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OCT

NOTE • FROM • THE PRESIDENT

Washington was the biggest one yet. Front page of the Lifestyle section of the Washington Times including a colour illustration. Interview on *Nostalgia Television* a nationally-syndicated cable show (thanks, Tom), Channel 8 covered the convention, *City Paper* did a half page, University of Maryland *Diamondback* did a half page. Radio interview with Wes Johnson, a super-nice guy at WHFS-FM, which aired the morning of the convention. The turn-out at Jim Dodson's *Closet of Comics* was huge. The notorious Beltway Traffic made us an hour late and they were lined up out the door and up the stairs. Even when I set a limit of one head-sketch and three autographs, the line-up never seemed to get any shorter. It easily took four hours even limiting the number of autographs.

Then the convention on Sunday was the same way. The line-up was blocking a dealer's table so we moved around the corner to the table that was reserved for Colleen Doran (she had to go to New York instead) and the line-up still blocked the guy's table. Every half-hour or so Ger or I would turn around and the line *still* wasn't any shorter. The last half hour was a nightmare; one head sketch and one autograph per person to make sure everyone got *some*thing.

Maybe it was just Washington. I hope so.

But there's the new policy; if we're running out of time we'll try to get everyone one autograph and one head sketch. It's impersonal as hell and I apologize for that, especially since the last batch of folks have waited the longest but . . . there you go. Get there early is the best advice, I guess.

Maybe it was just Washington.

Thanks to Jim Dodson for all his hard work (*Closet of Comics* missed matching their "best ever" day by thirteen dollars), to Jon Cohen of *Collector's World* for taking such an active interest, to Rick Ralsten (Why? Check his letter this issue), and to Thomas Kintner, Doug Ohlandt and Charisse Scott (the children's book illustrator) for the great hospitality.

If you ever find yourself at a place called the *Brickskellar,* order a Mamba beer (native to the Ivory Coast) and get someone else to drive you home.

★★★★★★★★★★

Having stupidly lost Ken Viola's phone number, I have been unable to badger him about the autographed Mick Jagger caricature. Just as I was sitting and staring at my legal pad wondering what to write next, Ken gives me a call! He talked to Mick Jagger and Keith Richards and *both* agreed to autograph a Glimmer Twins caricature to be auctioned to benefit the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund. Ken had shown the Prince Mick issues to Mick Jagger before, but this time he showed him all of the appearances, explained what the book was about and explained the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund (Jagger asked to see some literature on it, which we are falling all over ourselves to provide). Looking at the comic books Jagger asked Ken "Does he make money doing this?" I laughed. Then Ken mentioned that Keith took a *very* dim view of his portrayal (ice water floods my intestines), but once Ken had a chance to explain Cerebus a bit he took a more charitable view. Evidently everyone at the Rolling Stones office had been incredulous ("You're going to show this to Keith?! Are you crazy?") and Jagger as well ("You didn't show this to Keith, did you?"). It serves me right, really. I'm still trying to live down a drug-crazed, drunken reputation from years back and I get very frustrated when people won't let go of that image or are disappointed when I turn out to be "too normal". Anyway. I'm starting on the piece tomorrow and we'll try to have it on the inside back cover before the end of the year. And I'm DEFINITELY bidding on it myself.

★★★★★★★★★★

Oh and Ken asked me to correct the impression that he's still a roadie for the Stones. The last tour he did was 1981. He's now a roadie for the *Grateful Dead* and he informs me that he has managed to turn Jerry Garcia onto *Cerebus.* Bonus.

★★★★★★★★★★

Say, I almost forgot. Lekus & Levine send us a listing of all the media outlets that they had contacted when they bill us for each city's promotion. For Washington, they had a producer at WJFK that they contacted who had proposed to G. Gordon Liddy that he might want to do an interview. Is that wild? G. Gordon Liddy didn't think I was worth interviewing! G. Gordon Liddy said "no". *THE* G. Gordon Liddy. There has to be *some* way to work that into the press release, don't you think?

CEREBUS

NO. 163 **OCTOBER 1992**

DAVE SIM
President

GERHARD
Vice-President

LINDA BERZINS
Typesetting

MOTHERS & DAUGHTERS
a novel

•

BOOK ONE
(Cerebus 151 to Cerebus 162)
Flight

•

BOOK TWO
(Cerebus 163 to Cerebus 174)
Women

•

BOOK THREE
(Cerebus 175 to Cerebus 188)

•

BOOK FOUR
(Cerebus 189 to Cerebus 200)

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book two
women

The penis is an organ without scruple, without humanity, without common sense. Those women who understand this fact and make use of it have at their command all the resources of the modern world. I first had sexual congress at the age of fourteen with a high-placed government official in my native Lower Felda. He had pursued me, despite (or, rather, I suspect because of) my extreme youth for a period of several months. I was drawn very much to the power that he wielded within that government. I was attracted, however, not as a would-be lifemate, potential concubine or wife-to-be. Rather, I was drawn as someone who desired that same power for herself, as a means of instituting societal change for my own betterment and for the betterment of those elements of female society with which I was (and am) sympathetic. I presented my decision to him in the form of a bargain. He would answer all of the questions that I had about achieving, maintaining and using power and in exchange (once I was satisfied with his answers), his unscrupulous organ would be free to do with me as it would. We had a series of five meetings, each of several hours duration. I took meticulous notes, asked for clarification where I lacked understanding of the subject matter and began to get the first sketchy impressions of the parameters and dimensions of the task which lay before me. Once satisfied that I had learned all that this particular individual had to teach me, I then fulfilled my half of the bargain. The act itself took only slightly longer than eight minutes. I cleaned myself thoroughly, dressed and left his apartments. I had retained many of his letters of earnest entreaty and when (as I knew he would) he attempted to renew our relationship, I threatened him with exposure as a pederast. He ceased his unwanted attentions and I began my political career.

Astoria
Kevillist Origins

Great tolerance must be exercised when dealing with daughters. It is very difficult for a mother to recall that confused and turbulent time in her life when existence is profoundly unfocussed and a girl feels very strongly all the myriad forces which exert themselves upon her; both external forces and, more perniciously, her own tendency to submit herself and her will to that which is transient, attractive, compelling and ill-advised. Childbirth is the Goddess' greatest gift to womankind wherein an ordered mind supplants a disordered one; reality breaks through the thin membrane of interwoven and convoluted illusion which is a girl's consciousness to that point. Suddenly genuine purpose and True Womanhood make of her a contributing member of society, where previously she had been merely a discordant and willful obstruction to all that is ordered and healthy. The birth of a child takes the mother out of her own limited and self-absorbed vanity and shows her, clearly and in a way which will brook no denial, what the Goddess' purpose for her is. The irrational rage of the young girl who is reminded of this fact is proof positive that within her, at the core of her essential being, a True Voice is speaking always to her; reminding her that it is her destiny to bring forth new life; to care for it and to nurture it. When a daughter rails against this nature, the wise mother is silent and leaves it to the True Voice within the daughter to work its sweet magic on its own timetable, as it surely will. Time is always on the side of that True Voice.

Cirin
The New Matriarchy

ALL RIGHT, SON... WE HAD... AH SHUD WE HAD OUR FUN LAST NIGHT
BUT NOW, IT'S TIME T'GIT STARTED ON TH' SEMI-AUTOMATIC CROSSBOW FACTORY...
AN' TH' CHURCH OF TH' LIVING

Astoria:
No. Listen to what I'm saying. Move your fingers down the lock of hair. A little bit more. Hold it right there. Now tilt the fingers down. Loosen your wrist. You're fighting me. Tilt your fingers down toward the earlobe. A little bit more . . . no, that's too much. There. Like that.

Hairdresser:
(sighing) This is going to take forever.

Astoria:
It's going to take a lot longer than that if you don't listen to what I'm saying. Pay attention.

Hairdresser:
Yes, ma'am.

Astoria:
Turn your hand so that I can see how much hair you've got. Other way. All right. Now, cut the lock of hair on the other side of your fingers. No. No. In a straight line at the same angle as your fingers. Why do you think I told you what angle to hold your fingers at?

Hairdresser:
I . . . like this?

Astoria:
I asked you a question.

Hairdresser:
I . . . I'm sorry.

Astoria:
Follow the angle of your fingers. The scissors should be resting right against your . . . right against them. Flat against them. There. Yes. Like that.

Hairdresser:
Should I cut now.

Astoria:
Yes.

Astoria:
Now take your hand away so I can check how the . . . how it . . . That's good. That's fine.

Hairdresser:
Is it okay?

Astoria:
I just said it was. Okay, now move your hand back along the hair-line. No no. Not that high up. Here. Feel where my index finger is. My index finger. The one right next to the thumb. Pull a lock of hair exactly the same width right there. Don't tilt your fingers quite that much. A little bit less than you did on the first lock. Okay. Same idea; put the scissors flat against . . . that's it. Now you've got it. And cut.

Hairdresser:
Like this?

Astoria:
Okay. Take your hand away and let me see again. It's . . . well, it's not as good as the first one, is it?

Hairdresser:
I . . . I'm sorry.

Astoria:
Don't apologise; improve. Okay, now feel where my index finger is now. This time you're going to take a slightly wider lock of hair. *Slightly* wider. You've got a whole handful there . . .

TINK
BLOOOOOSOM
OOOOH, BLOOOOSOM!
SHUT
WHAT YOU DOING HERE CRAZY MAN?
BLOSSOM NOT WORKING TODAY - NO MAKE JIGGY-JIG
BLOSSOM!
MY ONE QUEEN!
MISTRESS OF MY HEART!
:OOOOH!:
QUIET! YOU WAKE UP MY BOY-FRIEND
I DON'T CARE WHO I WAKE UP- I'M IN...

LOVE
WHO-- WHAT WHO'S THERE?
NOBODY, JUST CRAZY MAN SELLING FLOWERS
YOU GO BACK TO SLEEP.
SHUK!

Clerk:
You're so lucky to have the figure that you do . . . it's just perfect for today's fashions.

Astoria:
Thank you.

Clerk:
Do you mind if I ask what your secret is?

Astoria:
Not at all. I chain myself in a dark cell for months on end and eat only one meal a day consisting of stale mouldy bread and rancid vegetable soup.

Clerk:
Oh! I . . . well, I'm sure . . . oh, now that's a lovely blouse isn't it?

Astoria:
Except for the dropped stitches across the neckline and the loose button in the middle, it's wonderful.

Clerk:
Oh! I hadn't . . . well, we could fix that in a jiffy, I'm sure.

Astoria:
Do you sell a lot of these?

Clerk:
Oh, my, yes! It's very, very popular.

Astoria:
Mm. So it's *common*, then.

Clerk:
Common? Well, no. I mean . . . we sell a lot of . . . when I say "a lot" . . . of course, I mean. *All* of our customers are *very* discriminating.

Astoria:
You've got mostly smaller sizes of this blouse. Nothing larger than a size eight, I notice.

Clerk:
Yes, Yes. You're right. Just *perfect* for you.

Astoria:
Seems to suggest that it's the blouse of choice for fat ladies, doesn't it?

Clerk:
Oh, well, no . . . I . . .

Astoria:
Discriminating fat ladies.

Clerk:
Well, we try to have something for . . . we have a wide assortment for *every* taste . . . from petite to . . .

Astoria:
Elephantine.

Clerk:
Full-figured, yes.

Astoria:
I'll take the cream coloured jacket I was looking at earlier and the T'capmin scarf.

Clerk:
Oh, those will look wonderful together.

Astoria:
Once I have the cuffs taken off, a vent added at the back and the cheap wooden buttons replaced with metal ones, I think it will.

Clerk:
Yes. I meant the scarf, though, worn Sepran-style over the jacket like a shawl, with a colourful blouse.

Astoria:
The central design is all right. Once I trim off all the gaudy blue foliage or whatever it is and tuck away the parts where the dyes ran, you won't even notice how asymmetrical it is.

Clerk:
Er. No. I'm sure you won't.

POT!
SMASH!

The great flaw of any matriarchy is that it limits political power to those individuals who are the least concerned with progress and achievement. While any society must see the safety of its children as a priority; it must not, should not and can not be that society's first priority. Advancement in the quality of female lives, advancement in the sciences, in medicine, in exploration, in the arts; the conquest of new territories, the expansion of borders in all areas of endeavour, both physical and mental, is critical to the health of empire. An empire which contents itself to build layers of insulation, both physical and mental, around itself and its citizenry, will soon find itself atrophying and falling swiftly into decay; easy prey for its competitors for whom aggression, whether between individuals, geographic regions or empires, stands as the foremost characteristic of their governing body. Where aggression is the primary characteristic of empire, it soon makes short work of those competitors who are quiescent, complacent and passive. The nation-state which is not prepared to consume its neighbours will, inevitably, be consumed by those neighbours.

Astoria
Kevillist Origins

The principle reason that we allow only mothers to govern and to decide the large issues of government in Upper Felda is that they are the only individuals with a genuine stake in the future of our country. If, as many advocate, we extended the voting franchise to daughters once they have reached an arbitrarily chosen age of majority, we would be submitting the fate of our grand and noble experiment to the caprice and whim of individuals who are seeking to escape their own nature. To give them such an outlet would provide an alternative to the following of their True Voice, the dictates of the Goddess Herself and would result in universal madness of the first water. Why have we forbidden men a role in the affairs of state? Because men seek to escape the fact of their expendability (once they have fertilized the egg which becomes new life) with incautious adventurism. Aware that nothing will remain of them to mark their passing, they inevitably seek to make their mark through destruction of peace and order. The young girl's unreasonable fear of childbirth will find outlets in exactly this kind of destructiveness. To open the flood-gates even fractionally; allowing daughters to wield political power; is to invite swift and chaotic inundation.

Cirin
The New Matriarchy

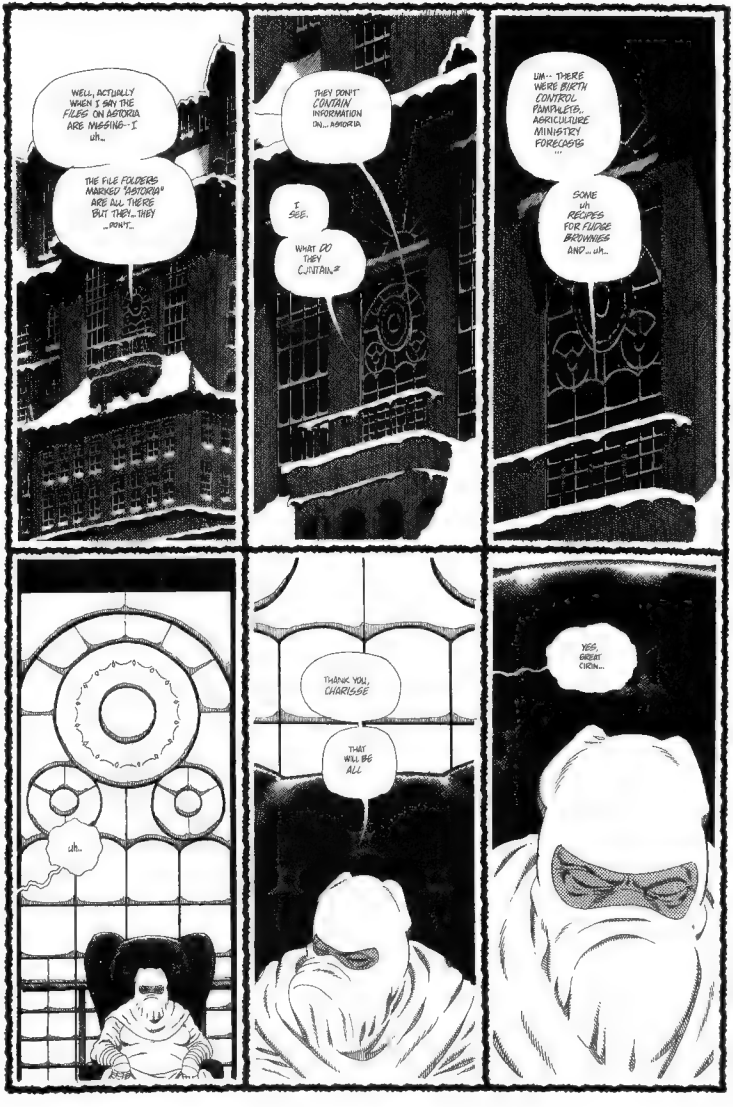
IT SEEMS TO ME AND CORRECT ME IF I'M WRONG...
WHAT MRS. GUTCH IS SAYING IS I WANT YOU TO BE HAPPY - I WANT YOU TO FIND THE RIGHT MAN"
"BUT RUNNING AROUND IN TWO LITTLE STRIPS OF CHAIN-MAIL..."
BUT I DID FIND A
HE LOOKED LIKE A DONKEY...
CLAP CLAP CLAP
BUT THAT DOESN'T
LOOKS THOUGH
SHOULD IT BE A MATTER OF...
SHOULD LOOKS BE THE
I DON'T WANT GRANDCHILDREN WHO LOOK LIKE DONKIES...

CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP
CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP
CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP
OKAY LET'S GET BACK TO THE ORIGINAL QUESTION "DO MOTHERS HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO REJECT AN UNSUITABLE SON-IN-LAW"
YES
NO
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
MY DAUGHTER MARRIED A MAN WHO LOOKED LIKE A HYENA
BUT I KEPT MY MOUTH SHUT AND PRETTY SOON
BUT, DO? SHE LOVE HIM?
SEE I THINK
WELL
LOVE IS
LOVE ISN'T THE ANSWER TO EVERYTHING
CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP
CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP
LOVE IS A BIG PART OF IT
MAYBE THE BIGGEST PART OF IT BUT, YOU KNOW... REALLY...

NOW WHEN YOU SAY YOU KEPT YOUR MOUTH SHUT ...
I NEVER SAID A WORD!
BUT YOU DIDN'T LIKE HIM!
I HATED HIM!
CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP
NO ONE WANTS HYENA GRANDCHILDREN
SO WHAT HAPPENED
SHE LEFT HIM
I JUST THINK WHAT'S INSIDE THE PERSON IS MORE IMPORTANT
CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP
A DONKEY ON THE OUTSIDE IS A DONKEY ON THE INSIDE

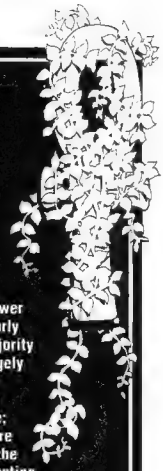
CLAP
I'D LIKE TO ASK DR. IRONCAT TO COMMENT HERE...
WHEN WE FEEL HURT OR REJECTED A LOT OF TIMES WE COVER UP THAT PAIN WITH HOSTILITY TOWARDS SOMEONE WE LOVE VERY MUCH.
I THINK IF MRS GUTCH COULD LOOK AT SOPHIA AND SAY "I LOVE YOU I UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE GOING THROUGH AND I WANT YOU TO KNOW I'M ON YOUR SIDE BECAUSE I'M YOUR MOTHER AND NO MATTER WHAT I'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU."
AND IF SOPHIA COULD SAY TO MRS GUTCH
"I KNOW YOU LOVE ME AND I'M SORRY MY CHOICES HURT YOU. BUT IT'S MY LIFE AND I HAVE TO LIVE IT MY WAY."
BUT ALSO SAY "HEY, MOM LET'S AGREE TO COMMUNICATE OUR FEELINGS WITHOUT GETTING ANGRY."
"BECAUSE AFTER ALL IS SAID AND DONE, WE'LL ALWAYS LOVE EACH OTHER AND THAT HAS TO BE MORE IMPORTANT THAN ANY SILLY OLD DISAGREEMENT
DR. IRONCAT IS THIS AUTHOR OF "MY MOTHER, MY HUSBAND, MY PAIN"
WE'LL TAKE A SHORT BREAK AND THEN WE'LL BE RIGHT BACK...
CLAPCLAP

AH HAVE AH SAY- AH HAVE GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS...
TH' BAD NEWS IS...
PUNISHEROACH HAS DISAPPEARED!
HELP!
JUST LIKE MUST HOLY!
AN ILLUSION!
THE CRINISTS WILL KILL US ALL!
WE'RE GOING TO DIE!
MURTER! THEY KILLED HIM!
PANIC!
I TOLD YOU
NOW WE'RE FUCKED!
SAVE US TARIM
RUN
HELP!
DIE!
RUN AWAY
OH HIT!
THE ILLUSIONISTS! THE ILLUSIONISTS!
IT'S THE WILL OF TARIM
WHAT IS?
US BEING FUCKED!
RUN!!
HELP!!
WE'RE DOOMED!
HELP!
TH' GOOD NEWS IS THAT MAKES LITTLE OL' ME YO' NEW LEADER!
BAH
THE ALBINO
BURN 'IM
SENSELESS VIOLENCE
IT'S HIS FAULT
THAT'LL FIX EVERYTHING
STRING 'IM UP
KILL 'IM
HEH HEH ALL RIGHT
Y'ALL CAN CARRY ME AROUND ON YOUR SHOULDERS FOR A LITTLE WHILE.
BUT THEN - AH SAY THEN - IT'S TIME TO GIT T' WORK...
LABOUR INTENSIVE THAT IS...


WELL, ACTUALLY WHEN I SAY THE FILES ON ASTORIA ARE MISSING-- I UH...
THE FILE FOLDERS MARKED "ASTORIA" ARE ALL THERE BUT THEY... THEY ...DON'T...
THEY DON'T CONTAIN INFORMATION ON... ASTORIA
I SEE.
WHAT DO THEY CONTAIN?
UM-- THERE WERE BIRTH CONTROL PAMPHLETS.. AGRICULTURE MINISTRY FORECASTS ...
SOME UH RECIPES FOR FUDGE BROWNIES AND... UH...
UH...
THANK YOU, CHARISSE
THAT WILL BE ALL
YES, GREAT CHRIN...

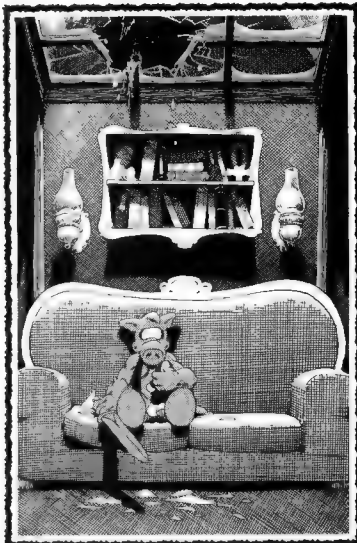
Most of the matriarchy's rhetoric centers on the family (or, rather, the Family); they are obsessive regarding childrens' needs for caring and nurturing and they hold in the greatest contempt those who hold any viewpoint contrary to this. The bond between mother and child is their most sacred totem and their universal rallying cry. It is, therefore, curious to note that at the upper levels of Cirin's government (and, in fact, at most levels of her bureaucracy) the children of her officials are cared for by nannies and governesses until the age of five when they are unceremoniously shipped off to government-run boarding schools. Cirin's own son, Gerrik told me that he did not spend a full day in his mother's company until he was nearly sixteen; and then it was merely to observe her working day so that he might have a fuller appreciation of the complexities of governing Upper Felda.

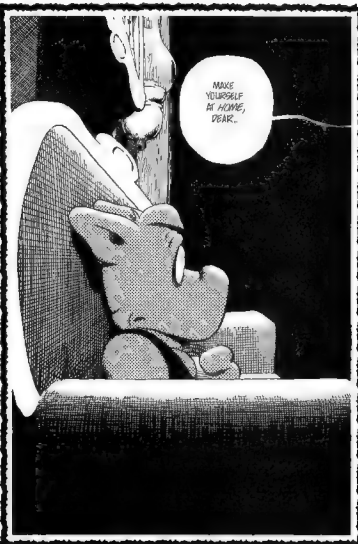
Astoria
Kevillist Origins



Those daughters who attempt to achieve political power without first having the benefit of childbirth are not nearly so trouble-some as one might be led to believe. In a majority of cases, their seeking after power and influence is largely a means of attracting male attentions. Once a suitable mate presents himself, they will continue to go through the motions of climbing the ladder of success for a time; but soon, they are married and shortly thereafter they are with child. In those situations where the cart is before the horse; where career comes before childbirth; it is interesting to note that few daughters ever return to that career. In those situations where the career comes after childbirth, career is kept in its proper place as an ancillary interest to the fuller and more important task of child-rearing.

Cirin
The New Matriarchy




MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME, DEAR..

I'M HAVING TEA
AND I IMAGINE YOU'D LIKE A WHISKEY
I'LL GET YOU ONE IN JUST A MOMENT ...

AND THEN?
AND THEN WE'LL HAVE A LOVELY LITTLE CHAT
SKTCH SKTCH SKTCH SKTCH

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dear Dave,

I have a problem. Every time I write to you a friend of mine blasts me for being a "fanboy". It's even worse when one of my letters actually sees print. He is also a *Cerebus* reader but tells me that I am wasting my time showering you with affection and tributes.

Now, I know "fanboy" is a derogatory term these days, so I'm trying to do anything I can to shake it. I can't deny my attraction to *Cerebus*. To just quit reading your book is out of the question. So I figured that maybe if I could get your support and backing on a few points I could show it to my friend and he would have to stop his relentless teasing.

There's no doubting that I'm a big *Cerebus* fan, but I don't think that anything I do could be considered "taking it too far." Let me know what you think.

1. Is it okay to eagerly await each new issue of *Cerebus*?
2. Is it okay to want to meet Dave and get a head sketch from him?
3. Is it okay to have two issues of Mind Games I (pulled apart to form the giant Cerebus) taped over my bed?
4. Is it okay to introduce myself as "the earth-pig born? The *fourth* aardvark?
5. Is it okay to serve rum and cigars during a blood ritual to my Mind Games poster?
6. Is it okay to wish for *Cerebus* to switch to the Image Comics label so you can sign books while sitting next to the "comic book greats"?
7. Is it okay to masturbate after reading *Cerebus*?
8. Is it okay to masturbate after reading the letters in *Cerebus* about masturbation?
9. Is it okay to have the picture of Ger from the back of Melmoth 4 in a heart-shaped frame next to my bed? (nice legs, Ger!)

I'll stop there. I think the answer to whether I'm a "fanboy" or not is pretty obvious. It would be real nice if you could print this with some supportive words for me, so I could rub it in my friend's sarcastic face. Maybe then I could go after him for his little J. O'Barr obsession.

Well, thanks a lot, Dave. If ever you need anything from me, like some help making deadlines or whatever, just let me know. I'm here for you, buddy.

Later,

Jeff Dobson
615 Mueller Road
Hartford, WI
USA 53027
(address pending)

P.S. If printed: This is the one I told you about, Phil. Whassup to Charlie and the Carnage Bunch at school. I'm outta here.

1. I hope so. 2. I think so. 3. It's a free country. 4. As long as you don't mind never getting laid. 5. Brandy goes better with cigars and blood is "tacky" at any social gathering. 6. I wish all the time to go roller-skating with Christina Applegate. As long as you know that that's all it is. 7. and 8. Wait a half hour or you'll get the "bends". 9. He (and I'm sure his long-time girl-friend Rose) really wish you wouldn't, but, again, it's a free country.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave:

I hate to beat a dead horse (though I suppose it is better than beating a live one) but I feel compelled to respond to the letter in issue 160 from officer William Stennis.

Yes, I did follow the trial of the four cops that beat Rodney King. Not only did I watch as much of the testimony as we got in this part of the world, I also read as many newspaper accounts as I could lay hold of, as well as news analysis and legal analysis. And you know what? Even without the videotape, the evidence I saw indicated an inappropriate use of force.

Am I the only one who noticed that the man who wrote the guidelines for use of force by the L.A.P.D. said on the stand that Lawrence Powell and his boys had used excessive force? Did anyone else see the testimony given under oath by one of the ACCUSED OFFICERS that in his opinion the beating constituted an inappropriate use of force? Did anybody notice that, contrary to reports by some members of the jury after the trial, there was both evidence and testimony to the effect that the other two men in the car had also been roughed up? Perhaps it slipped the minds of some people that the accused officers had lied on their police reports concerning the incident.

Perhaps I am too naive but the combination of the above mentioned evidence with the now infamous video seems to me to be sufficient to achieve at least a judicial reprimand for the officers in question.

No I have never been a cop, but I have been under fire from snipers, trapped in riot zones, and in a variety of other very stressful situations, so I do feel some sympathy for the police. On the other hand, by the age of 12 I had been illegally searched, questioned and harassed by the L.A.P.D. on a least five separate occasions. In college a friend and I were hauled in for questioning when, according to my pals in the D.A.'s office, we weren't even suspected of a crime. This may seem like reasonable behavior to Officer Stennis but it doesn't seem that way to me.

As an aside, in the case of the hypothetical videotape that Stennis mentions in his letter, no the tape alone should not be enough to convict, however if the woman says she was raped and several people who saw the incident also say she was raped you have a much stronger case and a much closer analogy to the Rodney King incident.

Sincerely,

George W. Claxton III
13 Edwards Square
Northampton, MA
USA 01060

P.S. I love the book and I am frequently amazed by your abilities as a writer.

I think we can all agree that a police officer's life is no day at the beach. Defining unreasonable force is a lot the same thing as defining pornography; the old "I know it when I see it" argument. Someone (I forget who) pointed out that Rodney King would not lie down and put his hands behind his back as instructed and all of the force was used to get him to do just that. I find the choice of venue for the trial suspicious and disturbing and I also think it would've been a better idea to try the individual officers separately. Several of them, I think, would've had the charges against them dismissed, leaving the two worst offenders' actions to be measured on a scale of unreasonability. I think the upper chessboards are starting to test us more and more with extremely complex news stories (Anita Hill, William Kennedy Smith, Rodney King, Woody Allen) to see if we're ready for the next step in human evolution. Either that or they just think its a giggle to watch us all screaming at each other.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

How could you? What did I do to deserve such a punishment? I mean, here I am in Ottawa, having discovered Grey and Furry in #152 two months after moving to Canada (I'm from France and yes, I do speek like zat) and now being a die-hard fan, dreaming about meeting you and despaired at reading the locations of your '92 tour, and then #160 comes out on August 14, with the back cover listing your US tour schedule: "August 8, Toronto. Only Canadian stop". I checked #159 and this stop was not mentioned!

So I have two alternatives: I can go to New York in November (a mere 800 km trip) or live in mourning for the rest of my life, knowing I'll never be SIM-perienced (I'll have to move back to France in January '93).

Now that I think of it, there IS a possibility: I could stalk you in the streets of Kitchener, kidnap you and lock you up until you've pencilled enough Most Holies to fully cover the walls of my bedroom. Lessee, first I gotta rent this "Misery" movie . . .

And now for something completely different. My heart bleeds everytime I think about my fellow froggies stuck in the country-where-everybody-loves-Jerry-Lewis-but-that-was-20-years-ago-so-fuck-off-with-your-clichés, who are fond of thought-provoking "bandes dessinées", but will never read your 6000-page symphony for at least one of the following reasons:

1. English is not their strong point
2. They think (with 97% accuracy) that American comic books are SuperMoronic
3. There are probably less than a dozen places where one can buy American comicbooks in France, and I doubt they carry *Cerebus*

SO, wouldn't it be marvellous if your phone books were translated in French? After all, large B&W trade paperbacks such as "Corto Maltese" are very successful in France/Belgium/Switzerland. I read about your desire to have total creative freedom, but you would only grant the publisher the right to print a translated version of your work. I know you're not a greedy bastard (although a few tens of thousand *francs* couldn't hurt) but think of it as an act of culture spreading. Of course some of the readers will miss the jokes related to American comic books (Wolveroach, Secret Wars, etc.) but I don't think that would prevent them from enjoying the rest of the story.

I would love to do the translation job myself (for free, of course) but I guess it would be better to hire a professional translator, as I'm far from understanding all the subtleties of your perverse language.

If you want, I can send you the addresses of the French/Belgian publishers most likely to be interested in your work. Or if you're too lazy, I could send them a few samples of your *Cerebus* myself.

Your move,

Philippe "Lemmy" DEPRUGNEY
516 Lyon St. N. #2
Ottawa, ON
K1R 5X9

P.S. A friend of mine said that just as only one spermatozoon among millions finds an ovule, you are one of the few comic book creators to break new grounds. What do you think of that analogy?

P.P.S. You once stated your admiration for Barry Windsor Smith. While I certainly love most of his work, I can't help but feel disappointed when reading his new monthly title, "Archer & Armstrong", whose artwork I find rather crude. Have you given it a try?

A debating society has begun on what *Cerebus* material to translate into french: format, dialects, etc. The head of the project is (Olivier Thierry; I've lost your address. Alors!). He welcomes anyone who is interested to throw in their two cents (francs?) worth, as well as to assist in the development and execution of the translation itself. All of this is strictly on a volunteer basis. If I'm satisfied with the results, we'll move on to the next phase of publication sometime in the next few years.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave—

Greetings from downtown Portland, Oregon where the name of the game is make lots of money. Sorry about that, I couldn't resist after reading a letter from one of your readers in issue #160 (July issue from Jerry Edwards). Well, here is the obligatory response to that letter as all stories have two sides. Obligatory because this store is all about comics and not all about money.

First I will tell "my side". The store is *Rocky Road Comics*. I am the owner, Nik, and the only employee. This store was started in February, probably a month before Mr. Edwards had visited here. Since comics have always been important to me and I have collected them forever (it seems), I have a large collection and a great deal of them mean a lot to me. At the time Mr. Edwards had been in I was very disorganized and most likely had lots of comics and stuff everywhere. A large portion of what is here is not for sale as it belongs to me. Most of it is fairly obvious, like the broom, the computer, etc. However much of my own personal possessions are here and they are not for sale. As I recall the treasury books were behind the counter and I had a problem with this particular person looking for bargains, etc. behind the counter. I'm sorry he was offended by that and I have learned to keep things I wish to keep behind closed doors. Secondly, *Free Cerebus* as I have mentioned earlier I had only opened in February, thus I couldn't have gotten *Free Cerebus* from the distributor as it came out much earlier. No, I had purchased mine up the street at the nearest comic store to me. I'm very sorry for Mr. Edwards' disappointment with the store. We (I and a few friends who

believe in me and this store) have put lots of effort into making this a fun place to be. This includes me learning and hopefully people like Mr. Edwards learning. I've learned, and not from just him, that things not for sale should not be in sight. I'm sorry it took a while for me to learn but life is a learning process. I hope Mr. Edwards learns that not everything is as black and white as he sees it. No, this store is not just about making money, although that is nice too. We are very interested in comics, art and people and making money (sorry Jerry). In addition I am very interested in how comics and their creators, artists, etc. are doing. However, as patient as I tried to be, albeit I'm not the best, I couldn't seem to convince Mr. Edwards of my situation, that this was a new store, that not everything is (or was) for sale, that comics that originally might have been free now cost money, whether a Kellogs give-away from the 60's or Cerebus from the 90's.

It is true I am here to make money. Aren't most stores? Sadly, there are too many people making judgements on others. I apologize for any discourtesy towards Mr. Edwards. As for *Cerebus*, very alive in the back issue market I'm happy to say. How long is it until stores are chastised for raising prices on expensive back issues. OK, OK it's already happened. Thankfully, you've got *Cerebus* compilations, of which I order many (and they are all cover price, thank you very much). Thank you for a great comic and for listening, Dave.

Thanks,

Nik Baldwin

P.S. Business has been great. I'm proud to say *Cerebus* compilations have helped. I've just this evening had a $110.00 sale on the first four *Cerebus* TPB's alone!!!

Well, I'm very glad to hear that *Cerebus* does so well for you and I thank you very much for your support. As I said in my answer to Jerry's letter (paraphrasing) comic book stores are part bookstore and part antique shop; I think the collector-investors and the reader-fans have to develop a greater tolerance for each other and recognize the validity of each other's interests if we're going to move ahead in the coming years. Thanks for writing.

Dear Everybody,

Hey! I feel like taking a few notes as to the goings-onses in *Mothers & Daughters*. There certainly is plenty to talk about, and Dave's practically throwing it in our faces. I mean, a game of chess in the Eighth Sphere?? Positively Burgmenesque!

Firstly, there's all this business about multiple lives. Mr. Po, if he's to be believed, seems to have been through the mill a few times. That's kinda neat. In fact it even explains the existence of historical figures in *Cerebus!* Thatcher, Groucho, Weisshaupt, Mick and Keith are just previous lives of the more recent versions. Whoa! But what about Cerebus himself, or Cirin? I mean, Po implies that peoples' lives are guided significantly by their past lives (I have Bran in mind here). But nowhere in the snatches of history that we're given do we find someone who may have been Cerebus in a previous spin. Maybe he's at the beginning of his existence! Maybe Dave is trying to tell us that we all begin as Earth-Pigs born! But when was Po an aardvark? If he was an aardvark in all of his lives, wouldn't people have begun to notice? Further, if Cerebus is at the beginning of his jaunt-through-the-field-that-we-call-life, does that explain why the demon Khem couldn't eat Cerebus's soul (because he didn't have one, because he had no previous lives)? Does this make sense, or am I being a goof?

If I am, I'm not alone. Dave's been taking his goofy pills, as seen in 153 where he has a huge penis growing out of the tower! (Real subtle, Dave.) Notice that this, in addition to the coins spinning and the lotus glowing, happens when Cerebus is at the height of his kick-butt-and-take-back-Iest spree. That is, he's doing Tarim's will, so the big dick isn't entirely out of place. But all of the magic tricks stop when Cerebus scampers off and Punisheroach takes over. I guess there's something to this most-holy business.

Ok, but what about the disappearance of Khem and Death in 151? Death ceased to exist because the Judge told him that he didn't exist (and he believed it). Khem ceased to exist because he realized that he had no reason for existence. And this is supposed to be part of the Great Change. Hmmm . . .

So there's this existence thing going on, and supporting that is double-elf and double-Judge, providing existential questions from a different angle. Is it a coincidence that all the existence problems seem to be springing up around the "fantasy" characters (aside from aardvarks)? Are we going to have a Tolkieneque clearinghouse of elves, demons, and men-on-the-moon? Is this the Great Change?

Probably not. The themes that seem to be developing have to do with existence and determinism/free will. Again and again we've seen Cerebus rant and rave about how Cerebus is UNIQUE and in control of his destiny. Yet, again and again, we see Cerebus not being in control. However, the biggie in all this lack of control stuff is the Judge's sentence, which Po poo-poos rather quickly. And heck, how can you believe a Judge who doesn't even know if he's Tarim or not? So I don't buy any of this "dying alone, unmourned and unloved" deal.

I think Cerebus completely controls his future. He made the Final Ascension, which seemed to go against history repeating itself. It'll be interesting to see how this ties in with the Tarim/Terim conflict in lest. All the divine intervention seems to be going in Tarim's favor, but perhaps Terim is just being subtle.

So, do any of the deconstructionists out there have anything to say about the names Cerebus, Cirin, and Suenteus Po?

This summer I taught at a math camp, and learned about a math game called "Aardvarks and Hilbert Spaces." Don't ask me why.

Later,

Tom "enumerator" Hull
459 Main St., Apt. 2
Wakefield, RI
USA 02879

Say, who do you think you are, talking about the story-line in Aardvark Comment? You go straight to your room, young man, and don't come out until you're ready to fit in with everyone else.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave and Gerhard,

A couple of months back I wrote you a letter which has since failed to see print. Fair enough, its your comic. Since then, however, I have been thinking about what I wrote quite a bit, as well as keeping a close eye on your comments on the

actions of the Big Two. A while ago you mentioned that the happy corporate chappies were once again trying to crush the indies by flooding the market and forcing you off the shelves. I thought you were being paranoid. I'm sorry Dave, I was wrong. In recent months the vast barrage of complete and utter crap coming on the market is overwhelming, to say the least. There seems to be a new title in the shops every time that I go in there, most of which are so terrible looking I can hardly believe it. Not to mention the plethora of "specials" featuring *Lobo, Batman, Wolverine* and everybody's favourite psycho-path *The Punisher.* And last week the truly frightening news that Image is outselling DC now. I don't know if this is true of all markets, but lets face it — DC have got at least some decent titles, but I've yet to see an Image title that I would purchase to use as toilet paper, and they're outselling DC. Shit, every one of their titles is about mutants, and none of them have stories (did you see Giffen's send-up of them in *Ambush Bug*? "Writers — who needs 'em? Wouldn't talk to 'em, wouldn't live near 'em!" Priceless stuff. *Doom Force* wasn't too shoddy either.) and they all take themselves so seriously.

Enough whining. The reason that I write, apart from apologising that I doubted you (although I still think that there are some worthwhile titles at the Big Two — or is that the Big One, and the Former Big One That Has Insufficient Mutants), is to ask what you recommend on the indie market. I'd like to support it, but funds are scarce these days, so I'm looking for a few tips. I've tried *Flaming Carrot* because of his appearance in C&S II but I'm not sure what else to try. I mean, sometimes, you need to get a few issues to really get into a title, but how do you know which title to stick to? I don't really read the fanboy press, so I'm looking for a few clues.

Anyway, keep up the good work, lads, and I'll see you both each month until 2004,

David Groenewegen
1 Hunt Str.
Nth. Balwyn Vic. 3104
AUSTRALIA

One of the great contributions Image has made is breaking down all the artificial barriers in the comic book marketplace. Marvel and DC used to be in this big room over here; the colour independents in this room over here; and the black and white comics over here. Now it's just one big room and the ball is in the retailers' court(s) as to what they choose to display and promote. The fact that DC is now number three isn't nearly as interesting to me as the huge drop in Marvel's market share to 1987 levels.

Personal choices: Yummy Fur, Peep Show, Yahoo, Hate, Naughty Bits, (sound like porno mag titles, don't they?), anything by Eddie Campbell, From Hell, To Be Announced, Crazy Bob, Bone, Hepcats, A Distant Soil. I'm sure I'm forgetting a few.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

This letter has been in the planning stages for quite some time now; as a matter of fact, I first decided that I wished to write to you when I heard your speech at the Diamond Retailer Convention several months ago. Although it is not unheard of for me to keep putting off a task for no apparent good reason, procrastination cannot be blamed for the long lag time between decision and action. Nor can I say (although my major in College was English) that I agonized for two months over this letter, perfecting each nuance, refining it and honing it till it became perfect in both form and content; on the contrary, I will (hopefully) be writing all of this in one sitting. So why, you may ask, did it take so infernally long for this letter to see the light of day? Bear with me. There's a story in the reason, if you have the patience to hear it.

As you may have guessed from my above mention of the Diamond Seminar, I am a comics retailer. I started out in the business working for the new comic shop in my town as a summer job when school was out. Before the year was out, I was practically managing the store, driving home from College each weekend after classes to run the store. Three years later, school finished, I purchased the store from the old owner. I'm 23 now, and have owned the store for the better part of a year. One of the earliest lessons taught to my by the old owner (let's call him Joe) during my days as his employee were the RULES OF ORDERING NEW COMICS. That's exactly how Joe viewed these rules — in all capital letters, and maybe even in neon. These were the rules for success as a comics retailer, and if ya don't follow 'em, kid, you'll never make it in dis bidness, etc., etc., etc. Joe's rules for new comics ordering were very simple:

(1) Order tons of "hot" first issues, especially if they were Marvels,

(2) Slash your order at least in half for the second issue — what the hell, you can always reorder it if it sells out,

(3) Be careful of those damned independents! Order light on them, and if a certain title does not sell immediately, for God's sake stop ordering it because you are just throwing your money away.

Perhaps I am painting a slightly unfair caricature of Joe, who was (and is) basically a nice guy, but in a nutshell, that was how he ordered new comics and that was how he taught me to order new comics. Since I was with Joe from the infancy of his store, I sat down with him as he filled out those early order forms for the first few months of business, asking questions and trying to learn something about the business end of the hobby I loved. During one of these sessions, he came across *Cerebus* on the order form. I questioned him about what it was (he had no *Cerebus* back issues in his start-up store stock), and he replied with something along the lines of "Some black-and-white about an aardvark. Sometimes people ask for it at shows." (Joe did shows every weekend, and still does, I believe.) Anyway, Joe decided to give *Cerebus* a try in the store, so he jotted down a "3" in the blank for number of copies, and moved on. The next month, Joe order the subsequent issue of *Cerebus.* Three copies. The next month, the same thing. About two weeks later, if memory serves, the previously ordered issue of *Cerebus* rolled in on Friday morning, gracing the racks of Joe's store for the first time. All three copies of it. It sat on the shelves for that week and the next, and when Joe was doing the new order form, he asked me to go over and count how many copies of *Cerebus* were left. Three copies, I said. We hadn't sold one yet. For Joe, this was instant validation of comics ordering rule #3, and somewhere in the footnote section of the stone tablet upon which the RULES FOR ORDERING NEW

COMICS were engraved, an addendum was added: *CEREBUS* DOES NOT SELL IN CHESTER, VA. Thus, Joe pointed out to me, he had given the little independent a chance, but it was a dud, a dog, a bomb, whatever. He would stop ordering it and thereby stop losing his money on the title, money which could be more productively pumped into extra copies of those oh-so-hot Marvels. Thus, after a brief shelf life of three issues, *Cerebus* died quietly and was no longer to be found on the new issue racks of Joe's store. A few times over the next year or so, a customer would occasionally come up to the counter and ask if we had any copies of *Cerebus,* to which I replied with something along the lines of "No, I'm sorry, but we could probably order you some." To which their reply was almost universally "No, that's okay, don't bother. I'll get it elsewhere." You get the picture.

After the initial growth spurt of the store, Joe began to let me do the rough draft of the order form. Business was pretty constant, so it was pretty easy to fill in most numbers. Joe would go over the order form when I was done, and increase or decrease anything that he felt needed changing, but I did the lion's share of the ordering. So when I finally purchased the store many months ago, doing the order form was a standard routine. However, many of Joe's habits had been ingrained in me over time. In other words, I still did not order *Cerebus* because I had been told eons ago that it did not sell. Then the Diamond Seminar rolled around. Since Baltimore was only two hours away and since I figured that, as a relatively new business owner, the seminar would be valuable to me, I decided to attend. I watched presentations, talked to other retailers, had a lot of fun. And I heard your speech. Whereas many other publishers simply approached the podium and rather awkwardly said something to the effect of "Here's what we're putting out this year. Order lots of it because it'll sell well for you," you gave a true and genuine *speech.* You were articulate and eloquent, impassioned without being didactic, critical without being condescending, and most of all you were *absolutely right.* Everything you said, Dave, *everything,* struck a chord. About the embarrassment over the investment/speculation side of our industry. About drastically slashing orders after issue #1. About our fast approaching the "absolute now" environment. And about investing some of your profits in "blue chip" items — quality books like *Cerebus.* Right then and there — as I was standing and clapping as you concluded your speech — I knew that on my next order form, I would start ordering *Cerebus* again. What Joe did not realize when he cut *Cerebus* from his order forms years ago is that he did not even give the book a chance. First of all, at the time that he dropped *Cerebus,* 90% of the customers were the young teenagers who count the days until the new X-Book is released, the kind who will not pick up a comic unless it says "Marvel" in the upper left-hand corner. Of course they're not going to plunk down the equivalent cost of two MARVEL COMICS for an independent that they probably have never heard of. Which leads to observation #2: Joe did not market *Cerebus* at all. He let the book sit on the shelves and did not once recommend it to someone picking up, say, the newest issue of *Sandman* or to a customer who often read independents or to a customer looking for something new to try. And the book did not sell any copies over a two-week period. Gee, I wonder why.

As I said, I am now ordering *Cerebus* again. I've picked up a substantial run of back issues and have ordered copies of every "phone book" available from the Diamond Star System. Originally, I did this for one reason: I was so damned impressed with you as a person and what you had to say that I was bound and determined to support you in my store in any way that I could. But now I have two reasons for promoting *Cerebus* in my store. The second reason? I've started reading the book. (Incidentally, this is also the answer to the question that I posed in the opening paragraph — the one about why it took me so long to write this letter. I felt that I should have actually read some of your work before I sent you a letter of comment, so I waited until I finished all of the phone books. I know, I know — what a let-down. You've waded through this very long letter waiting for the answer to that question and you find it inserted parenthetically in the middle of a paragraph. Oh well.) With the help of the phone books and back issues, I have read the complete story up through the conclusion of *Jaka's Story,* along with scattered issues of *Mothers & Daughters.* And I'm working on filling in gaps. I can't remember the last time that I traded for comics at a convention that were for *me to read* and not to fill some customer's want list. I haven't been this excited about a comic, haven't had the desire that I feel when I pick up a nice *Cerebus* run — you know, to go home and read them RIGHT NOW!! — since I first started collecting comics as a kid. Why? Because it's SO DAMN GOOD, that's why. In fact, it's downright brilliant and just keeps getting better with each issue. Now, after hearing your speech, I would have stocked and supported your book even if I read a few issues and thought that it sucked, because I was so impressed with you as a person. However, after reading as much of *Cerebus* as I have been able to acquire up to this point, I have two excellent reasons for supporting it in my store: by promoting *Cerebus,* I am supporting both an extraordinary creator and an extraordinary book.

In short, you have picked up one extra fan and supporter. I will be promoting *Cerebus* as much as I can and whenever possible within my store. I will keep back issues, new issues, and phone books in stock at all times, and I will strongly recommend them to anyone that I think may be interested in them. Thank you, Dave, for your integrity, for your creativity, for your commitment. And thank you for reminding me that the best sale of all is when you turn on a new customer to something as consistently excellent as your work in *Cerebus.*

Sincerely yours,

Rick Ralsten
Owner, *The Time Capsule*
12104–A Harrowgate Rd.
P.O. Box 248
Chester, VA
USA 23831
(804) 748-4002

P.S. I look forward to seeing you at the Washington, D.C. stop of the U.S. Tour. If I don't set up there as a dealer, then I will certainly attend as a regular, paying customer. Hopefully, there I can find those missing issues of *Melmoth* and *Mothers & Daughters* that I need to complete my run.

I think this is a great example of what can happen when a store owner reassesses his ordering "rules" on an on-going basis. There is obviously not a great deal

of time to do so, since running a store is more than a full-time occupation. But, I think we're reaching a point where there is more material out there than any one store can provide reliably and, instead of trying to kill each other with the same super-hero books, stores in the same geographic areas should get together and decide what each of them *wants* to carry. If you're a store owner and you're the world's biggest *Hate* fan, why not trade for the other stores' stock and become *the* local outlet for Peter Bagge's work?

Thanks for a real day-brightener of a letter, Rick. You made the whole trip to Baltimore worthwhile, again, after reading Gary Groth's comments in the Comics Journal had put something of a damper on my happy memories.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave:

Ya know, the same day I bought ish #160, I also bought Julie Doucet's *Dirty Plotte* and *Bloodsucker* by Lydia Lunch and Bob Fingerman. The other two (let's call 'em "girl comix") featured men having horrible things done to their penises! And I was just on the floor over this, doubled up with laughter. I thought it was just the funniest thing.

Then, I asked a friend of mine (a guy) what he thought about these two little girl comix, and well, he was not too thrilled about the penis thing. I thought he was being overly sensitive, but he pointed out to me that if you slice a woman's breast off (in a comic, I mean) that's certainly considered "sexist". But you can do whatever you want to a penis, at least in comix. I thought it was artistic justice — how many times have we seen women brutalized in the movies and other varieties of entertainment compared to the amount of times we see men brutalized. But I guess two wrongs don't make a right.

Anyway, I guess the point is I was wondering how other people felt about this. I still think it's funny. I guess I might get a little squeamish if Cerebus started going around biting women's clitoris's off. Damn, imagine the letters you'd get about that!

Love, Connie
JAF Box 8274
New York City, NY
USA 10116

I think squeamishness probably has a lot to do with identifying with the sexual equipment in question and the gender of the creator (ahem) mutilating it.

This is as good a place as any to mention the First (and probably Only) Cerebus Costume Contest to be held on the evening of Thursday 12 November 1992 at ELA Worldwide Video in Manhattan (8 pm), in association with my appearance on Drew and DeCandido's Word Balloons television show. Costumes must be of any Cerebus character. If you want to enter, you have to write Word Balloons/Cerebus Costume Contest, c/o The Chronic Rift, P.O. Box 2224, New York, NY 10185–0023, or call (718) 994-4392. You must provide your name, phone number where you can be reached and which Cerebus character you intend to come as.

The winner receives a complete autographed set of "phone books", a complete set of Cerebus t-shirts from Graphitti Designs and a complete set of all six regular episodes of Word Balloons '92: Interviews with Comic Folk. Three runners up will be chosen, who will each get an autographed copy of the latest issue of *Cerebus*, an autographed copy of the *Jaka's Story* Epilogue issue, plus all six regular episodes of Word Balloons '92. A VHS video of the contest will also be made available in January for $10. All profits from the sale to go to the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund. Make cheque or money order payable to Keith R.A. DeCandido at the above address.

Word Balloons '92 (it says here) is a show featuring interviews and other neat stuff with top comics professionals from the mainstream to the alternative to the underground, airing every Friday at 3:30 p.m. on Manhattan Cable's channel 17. The costume contest will air 25 December 1992 and 1 January 1993; Keith notes that they are more commonly known as "Christmas" and "New Year's Day". Nothing gets past that boy.

Why is it appropriate to mention this here? Because *the* Connie Lingus (self-described "Cerebus groupie/post porn poetess") will be helping Keith and I to judge the contest and will (possibly) donate an item of apparel of a distinctly personal nature as one of the prizes.

Hey — it was *my* idea. Lighten the fuck up.

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MORE!
LOVE
I DON'T THINK WE SHOULD SEE EACH OTHER ANYMORE.
WHY NOT?
MY PARENTS WANT ME TO DATE SOMEONE ELSE.
I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU COULD GET A MIND OF YOUR OWN AND TELL THEM TO FUCK OFF?
MAC + CHEESE?
NO.
WHY DON'T THEY LIKE ME?
THEY THINK YOU'RE GAY.
WHERE DID THEY COME UP WITH THAT?
WELL, YOU'RE "ARTSY," YOU'RE TALL AND SKINNY WITH LONG HAIR, AND YOU'RE TOO POLITE ON THE PHONE.
BOY, NOTHING GETS PAST THOSE GUYS.
I'VE SOMETIMES WONDERED ABOUT YOU MYSELF.
WHAT?! DO YOU REALIZE HOW MANY SKIRTS I'VE RISKED LIFE AND LIMB TO LOOK UP? OR HOW MANY BOOBS I'VE STARED AT?
I THOUGHT YOU SAID YOU DIDN'T LOOK AT OTHER WOMEN'S BREASTS!
I LIED!
CHRIS AUBRY RR#3 OTTAWA, IL. 61350

START
DEREK DRYMON ©91
I DON'T GET IT
WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU DON'T GET IT?
I DON'T GET IT
WAIT A MINUTE... DID YOU READ THIS PART...
YES
AND..
I DON'T GET IT
I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS..
HOLD STILL
PIP
POP.
PINK.
POINK..
WAIT! WAS I BLIND?! THIS STUFF IS UNBELIEVABLE!
THAT'S FUNNY? NOW I DON'T GET IT.
THE END

GALLERY

LOVE STRUCK
IN THE RAIN

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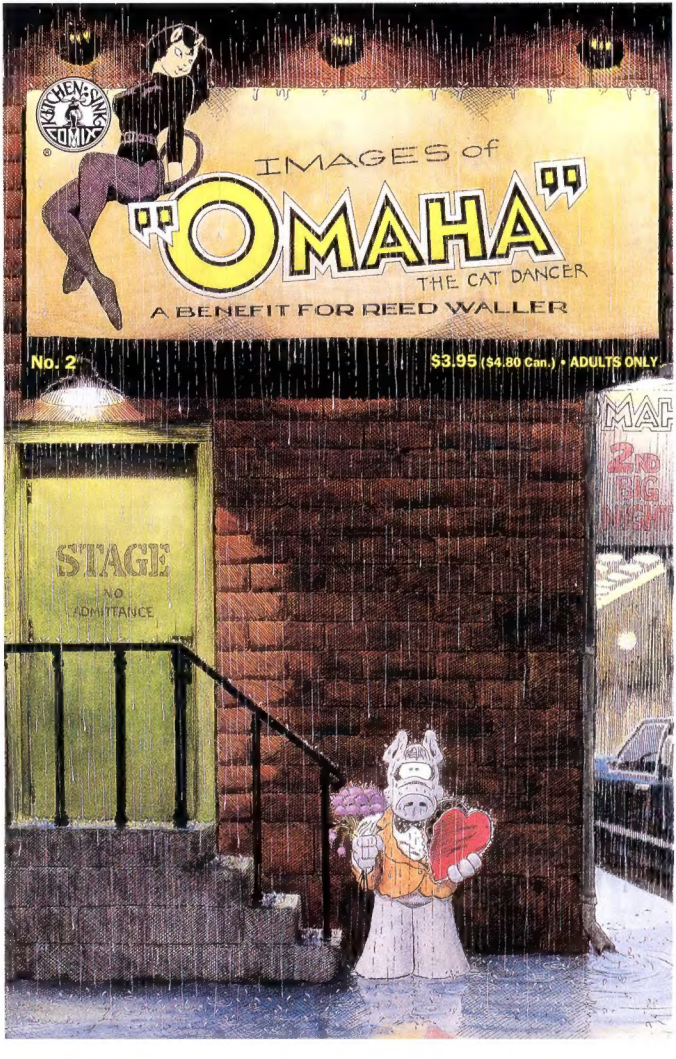
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